(b) if so, the quantity of wheat to be imported;

(c) whether Government have obtained the information regarding prices of wheat in the international market while taking the decision to import wheat in the country;

(d) if so, the prices thereof; and

(e) whether wheat is to be imported before March in the country as per the decision, if not, the extent to which the delay would beneficial?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir The STC has been permitted to import 5 lakh tonnes of wheat.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. As per information published by the International Grains Council (IGC) the export price of wheat as on 14.2.2006 in major wheat exporting countries is as under:—

Name of country	Variety	Export price (f.o.b. US$/ton)
Argentina	(Up River)	137
Australia	ASW	197
Canada	1 CWAD St. Law	201
USA	No. 2SRW (ord.)	149

(e) The wheat is planned to arrive between end March to mid May, 2006.

Revamping of sick sugar mills

600. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have drawn up some action plan to revamp sick sugar mills;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action plan of Government to focus on biogas-based co-generation of power in sugar industry to produce additional power in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHLESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Sugar Development Fund Rules, 1983 provides that in order to help potentially viable sick sugar undertakings, in the private or public sector, which have been recommended by the Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction or in the cooperative sector, which have been recommended by the Committee for Rehabilitation, shall be eligible for sanction of loan for modernization or rehabilitation of the plant and machinery and for sugarcane development schemes.

Loan for modernization or rehabilitation can be granted up to sixty percent of the eligible project cost provided the sugar undertaking contributes a minimum of twenty of the project cost from its own resources as promoter's contribution.

Loan for cane development scheme can be granted from Sugar Development Fund up to ninety percent of the eligible project cost provided the sugar undertaking contributes a minimum of ten percent of the project cost from its own rescources as promoters contribution. The loans carry a concessional rate of simple interest of two percent below the "bank rate". which currently works out to four percent.

(c) In January, 2003, Sugar Development Fund Rules, 1983, have been amended to provide for sanction of loan from sugar Development Fund, to sugar factories having an installed capacity of 2500 tonnes crushed per day or higher provided the project envisages marketable surplus of co-generation power and provided at least ten per cent of the project cost is met by the sugar factory from its own resources as part of the promoters contribution.

The Government (Ministry of Non conventional Energy Sources) is implementing a programme for promotion of optimum surplus power generation from bagasse in the sugar mills. The programme provides for central financial assistance in the form of interest subsidy varying from one per cent to six percent depending upon boiler configuration.

The Government also provides assistance for organising business/ interaction meets, training programmes etc. Several other fiscal incentives are available to the enterpreneurs for setting up co-generation projects, *viz.*

(a) concessional custom duty and excise duty exemption;

(b) 80% accelerated depreciation in the first year;

(c) tax holidays on income from the power projects;

(d) exemption from local sales tax in some States.

A target of 700 MW has been fixed for biomass power/bagasse based co-generation projects for tenth five-year plan.

Price-Rise of wheat, rice and cereals

601. SHRI JANARADHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether prices of wheat, rice and other cereals are on the increase;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures proposed to be taken to control the price-rise and ensure their availability through the PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Among the cereals in the Wholsesale Price Index (WPI), the annual percentage variations in the prices of wheat and jowar as on 4.2.06 are higher in comparison to those prevailing a year ago as indicated below:

	Annual % variation in the WPI	
Cereals	As on 4.2.2006	Corresponding period in last year
Rice	2.2	2.4
Wheat	8.8	-0.8
Jowar	11.3	3.2
Bajra	11.5	19.1
Maize	8.7	5.1
Barley	10.7	11.5
Ragi	3.7	-6.9